

FINAL

MINUTES
MINUTEMAN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 31, 2021 6:30 P.M.
VIA REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Present:

Pam Nourse, Chair (Acton)

Alice DeLuca, Secretary (Stow)

Steve LeDoux (Concord)

Judith Crocker (Lexington)

Jeff Stulin, Vice-Chair (Needham)

Michael Ruderman (Arlington)

Ford Spalding (Dover)

Dave O'Connor (Bolton)

Absent: Jennifer Leone (Lancaster)

Weighted Vote: Weighted Vote present at start of meeting: 87.42%

Others Present: Dr. Edward Bouquillon, Dr. Amy Perreault, George Clement, Anthony Chiariello, Katie Bouchard, and Julia Pisegna

NOTE: This was an extra meeting. The Committee does not usually meet in August. The section on the start of school discusses adjustments being made due to the continuing pandemic.

1. CALL TO ORDER: OPEN SESSION

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF REMOTE PARTICIPATION

VOTE: To adopt remote participation by all members of the Minuteman School Committee pursuant to and in accordance with Sections (2) and (3) of the Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law made by the Governor of Massachusetts on March 12, 2020, such adoption to be effective until said Executive Order is rescinded or the Commonwealth's State of Emergency as referenced in said Executive Order, is terminated, whichever happens first.

ACTION 2021 #160

Moved (DeLuca) and seconded (Crocker)

To approve remote participation

VOTE: 8 members in room at time of vote

Weighted Vote present: 87.42%

Weight needed: > 43.71%

Names of towns opposing or abstaining: none

Final percentage results of vote: 87.42%

Final status of the vote: Unanimous

Roll Call:

Pam Nourse (Acton) (Yes)
Michael Ruderman (Arlington) (Yes)
Dave O'Connor (Bolton) (Yes)
Steve LeDoux (Concord) (Yes)
Ford Spalding (Dover) (Yes)
Judith Crocker (Lexington) (Yes)
Jeff Stulin, Vice-Chair (Needham) (Yes)
Alice DeLuca, Secretary (Stow) (Yes)

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Bouquillon announced that no public comments were received.

4. GOOD OF THE ORGANIZATION, *Pam Nourse*

Committee Chair, Pam Nourse, invited comments from members for the good of the organization. Mr. Ruderman shared that all members received an email which contested and confronted the policy on masks and vaccines.

Committee Chair stated that item will be discussed in depth under the Superintendent's Report.

Ms. Nourse thanked the faculty and staff for all their work during the summer to get ready for the new school year.

Ms. Nourse then introduced Glenn Koocher the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) who will serve as the consultant for the Superintendent search process.

Ms. Nourse shared that the new 2021 weighted voting chart was provided to members in the School Committee packet and reflects the weighted vote for each town based on the rolling average of the number of students.

Ms. DeLuca shared that she appreciates having this important information at this time of year.

5. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. Proposed District Staffing Revisions

Dr. Bouquillon provided members a copy of the proposed functional district organizational chart in their School Committee packet. He reviewed the chart and described how the chart begins with the School Committee and is designed around specific skills and tasks that are inter-related. He noted that the work on this functional district organizational chart began while Mr. Mahoney was still in the district as we compared Minuteman to other vocational school districts and found that we were in line with some items, and not in line with other items, and that this proposed functional district organizational chart brings us more in alignment to other vocational school districts. He shared that it is a cost-neutral reorganization.

He noted that members of the Executive Team have worked with Jeff Lawrence of Organizational Agility Advisors to understand each other better, understand our strengths, and how we can work together more closely, and this proposed functional district organizational chart is a reflection of that work. He pointed

out that the Business Manager has a dotted line to the School Committee, as well as other dotted lines which align with the way we operate.

He noted that Rich Ikonen is now the Assistant Superintendent of Facilities and Operations. His background includes being licensed as a Business Manager and Superintendent, and he has had experience in both of those areas at Montachusett Tech and another district.

Dr. Bouquillon reported that Assistant Superintendent Dr. Amy Perreault has taken over a lot of the Human Resources components, such as onboarding, licensing, background checks, hiring and processes, but does not include payroll.

Ms. Nourse asked if the dotted line that goes from the Business Manager to the School Committee also goes to the Assistant Superintendent? Dr. Bouquillon confirmed that yes, it goes through the Assistant Superintendent.

Ms. DeLuca thanked Dr. Bouquillon for the organizational chart and shared that one of the responsibilities of the School Committee is to vote for the approval of the appointment of the Assistant Superintendent positions, as previously done in every case, and we should continue to vote to approve that position as stated in the law, and to meet and perform their responsibility to oversee that process.

Dr. Bouquillon agreed, and in that spirit, asked for a motion to approve the functional organizational chart.

Ms. DeLuca shared that it is important for them to review the contract and salary of the position of the Assistant Superintendent, as done in the past. While she is not disagreeing with Dr. Bouquillon, she believes the language states something to the affect 'shall not be unreasonably denied', but it is a public meeting discussion about the type of level of these jobs, and the rules should be followed as we done in the past.

Dr. Bouquillon shared that at the next School Committee meeting, he will provide a job description and the contract for review by the School Committee.

Dr. Bouquillon noted that a vote approving the functional district organizational chart is not necessary.

b. Opening of School – Fall 2021

Dr. Bouquillon shared that it was wonderful to have a full school again. He noted that adjustments will be made to the lunch schedule, and that all students were masked in accordance with the State mandate and students adjusted to it easily. He also noted that adjustments will be made to some of the bus runs due to some students being on the bus for too long a period of time.

Dr. Bouquillon shared that there is still some additional hiring that needs to be completed. Dr. Perreault is managing that process, and that some of this is due to some very late summer resignations. He reported that there are approximately 16-17 new staff members, including technical assistants hired for each pathway, as well as full-time building substitutes. He noted that the open position in the logistics engineering space has been very difficult to fill with someone coming out of industry or from another school.

Dr. Bouquillon reported that he will be sending a fact sheet to Committee members regarding the vaccine, and that he has received some emails from parents. He has spoken with the staff, teachers, and union leadership regarding mandating the vaccine for staff because if we were a fully vaccinated school, we would not have to mask. He shared that Superintendents were informed today from the Commissioner of

Education that there was a metric of 80%, which is not written in stone or decided yet, and that when he looks at the data from our school and our nine-member towns, including Belmont and Watertown, we are approximately 86% student vaccinated right now. He commented that he does not know the level of vaccinations from the staff point of view, but discussions included a vaccination mandate for staff. For those staff that did not want to get vaccinated, they would get tested weekly.

He reported that he applied and was approved by the State for their “test and stay program” in which the State provides the testing materials and staffing. In that program, if a student is a close contact, they would be tested at school, allowed to stay at school, and would not need to go home. He chose not to get involved in the pooled testing because having students from over 30 towns, pooled testing did not make sense for the district.

He is *not* asking for a vote at this time on the vaccine mandate and noted that Arlington Public Schools is requiring vaccines for all teachers and school staff or they will be required to submit to weekly testing and believes that Lexington is also discussing a vaccine mandate as well, but is not aware as to whether the Lexington School Committee has voted on that as of this time. He mentioned the additional schools of Burlington, Salem, Cambridge, Boston, Chelmsford, and Medford which have also voted on a vaccine mandate for teachers and staff. The States of Oregon and Washington are requiring that teachers get vaccinated or face termination.

He commented that the vaccination is the key for us to get back to some sense of normalcy, and he will continue discussions with teachers and staff, and continue to listen to parents who seem to be in favor 8-1 for the vaccination mandate. He will let the State and the Department of Public Health make the decision on the student vaccination mandate, and that the Governor is promoting vaccinations for everyone. He shared that we have been fortunate as most people are reasonable and appreciative of what we are trying to do.

Mr. Stulin commented that while it is discouraging that we are still talking and arguing about masking and that this pandemic is not over, he is grateful that we will be back in school with students and are in a much better place than we were at this time last year.

Ms. Nourse agreed and appreciated the reminder that we are in a different place and she recognized the thought and work that has gone into these difficult discussions and decisions.

Ms. Crocker mentioned that bussing issues have recently been in the news and asked if we have a sufficient number of bus drivers. Dr. Bouquillon shared that Mr. McCarthy who runs the NRT Bus services was recently on the news stating that his company is short 300 bus drivers. Dr. Bouquillon noted that there were some late busses today, and that there will be the need for some adjustments, but at this time as far as we know, all of our busses are fully staffed, though he foresees the need to split runs because students are on the bus for too long, but for the most part, we are in good shape.

Mr. Ruderman added that emails were received by a couple of folks who did not identify themselves either as members of our community as Minuteman parents or any such further information. He noted that the communication was extensive, lengthy, and was filled with citations, website links, and legal references. He shared that it is not what he is prepared to respond to individually. He asked the Superintendent if the school administration plans to respond to it on our behalf or if this is something that the School committee needs to address.

Dr. Bouquillon sent the Minuteman Information Fact Sheet on vaccinations to members and a copy of that will be the district's response. He asked members to review it and send any feedback to him. He does not feel the need to escalate the response beyond the facts as we know them because we did do some investigation on some of the resources that were being quoted in that correspondence. He said we are just trying to put the facts out there and he will not get into individual opinions. The facts are the facts, and we are going with the science.

Ms. Nourse asked members to review the information and respond back to Dr. Bouquillon with any questions or comments. She expects that these conversations will continue as new guidance continues to come out on a regular basis.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Strategic Planning Subcommittee Update – Ford Spalding

Mr. Spalding shared that the subcommittee has been working on four draft documents, which includes a copy of the profile of the Minuteman district included in the School Committee packet. The documents have been prepared by subcommittee members Alice DeLuca, Pam Nourse, and Ford Spalding, and forwarded to Mr. Koocher for review and comment, followed by Dan O'Brien, Communications Director, for final edits and review.

He asked that members review the documents and send any feedback or recommendations back to him as soon as possible. These documents will then be distributed to the members of the Minuteman Superintendent Screening Committee. The Superintendent profile, which includes work from the School Committee retreat, is also being drafted, as well as an invitation to apply and application. He noted that in an effort to stay on schedule, all documents need to be completed in the next two weeks, which may require the need for an additional School Committee meeting and vote.

He noted that any applicant will receive a lot of information on Minuteman, as well as information and links to our website and promotional films, to assist them in making their decision if they want to apply.

Mr. Koocher then presented to Committee members a summary of the process which will be undertaken starting with the distribution of the material being worked on to a broad series of contacts, including universities, districts, other professionals in the business who are involved in training superintendents, recruiting superintendents, working with superintendents, MAVA and MARS, as well as the Superintendents' Association. They will use the materials to attract the largest qualified pool of candidates to present to the Search Committee.

He shared that once the Screening Committee is approved, he will work with the members to give them an orientation, explain the process of screening candidates, and advise them to follow the proper procedures relative to the Open Meeting Law and Public Records law, screen those candidates to develop a series of thoughtful questions to pose to the candidates, and invite the candidates to in-person or Zoom interviews. There will also be some preliminary interviews of the candidates and he will work with the Screening Committee on items such as appropriate reference-checking and due diligence of the candidates. From that point, Mr. Koocher will assist the Screening Committee members in preparing a recommendation to the School Committee for candidates to interview publicly.

Mr. Koocher has shared some practices which he believes are helpful and encouraged the faculty and members of the School Committee not to hesitate to be recruiting candidates, speaking to their peers, respond to questions they might be asked, and to promote Minuteman. He commented that Minuteman is

a special place, not only because of the new building, but there is a top-class faculty, great leadership, great location and area to live, so he expects a good pool of candidates to interview.

Mr. Spalding asked Mr. Koocher for the timing of the schedule. Mr. Koocher responded that the goal is to get the advertising out within the next couple of weeks, close applications sometime in mid-October, and complete the search process in time for an appointment before the winter holidays, which allows for a six-month period to orient and collaborate with the new superintendent.

Mr. Spalding clarified that it is a Screening Committee and the School Committee is the appointing committee and that this is a confidential process and not a public process because there are some individuals that may be applying or interested in the job who have not informed their employer that they are looking and stressed that candidates should only communicate with the Screening Committee and should not announce their intentions to anyone but the Screening Committee. After the Screening Committee passes on the finalist names to the School Committee, that is the time when it becomes public.

Mr. Stulin addressed Mr. Koocher and shared that he hopes he appreciates how very different the school, the administration and the School Committee is from the last time a search was undertaken, Mr. Koocher shared that has been made very clear and he has witnessed that it is a very different place, but noted that in his experience, Minuteman never had a bad reputation, it always had a great reputation, never as great as it is now, but it is in a strong position and it will result in a different process.

Mr. Spalding requested to reverse the two votes and begin with the formation of the Screening Committee. He shared that the group has worked very hard to define the type of people who should be on the Screening Committee in an effort to get as many constituents as possible and ensure that every community in our district is represented. The group includes four School Committee members, all of whom have sat as Chair of the School Committee over the last decade plus, and 3-4 were involved in Superintendent searches either here or in other locations, four Minuteman teachers/administration, representing academics, CTE, special education, administration, and one of whom has served as past officer of the Minuteman Teachers Association, two current parents representing Lexington and Acton, two representing district town officials, and one representative of work force development.

Ms. Spalding recommended the following individuals:

Name	Position
Gregg Bunn	Executive Director - Metro South/West Workforce Board
Jimmy Cataldo	Minuteman Parent (Lexington)
Adam Chapdelaine	Arlington Town Manager
Alice DeLuca	School Committee (NRSD towns – Stow, Lancaster, Bolton)
Nikki Devereaux	Minuteman Math Teacher (Academic)
Christine Higgins	Minuteman Parent (Acton)
Amy Hutchings	Minuteman Special Education Department

Pam Nourse	School Committee (Acton)
Carmin Reese	Concord Moderator
Ford Spalding	Committee Chair (Dover)
Al St. George	Minuteman Electrical Teacher - CTE
Jeff Stulin	School Committee (Needham)
Brian Tildsley	Minuteman Assistant Principal/Coach

Ms. DeLuca clarified that she would be representing the Nashoba District towns including Bolton, Lancaster, and Stow.

Mr. Spalding has spoken to everyone on the Committee and feels it is a very strong Committee and all are committed to Minuteman. He is anxious to get to work and he expressed that he expects 100% participation at all meetings. The first meeting will be a tour of the building and campus, followed by an in-person meeting.

VOTE: to approve the proposed members of the Superintendent Screening Committee

ACTION 2021 #

Moved (Spalding) and seconded (Stulin),

To approve the proposed members of the Superintendent Screening Committee

VOTE: 8 members in room at time of vote

Weighted Vote present: 87.42%

Weight needed: > 43.71%

Names of towns opposing or abstaining:

Final percentage results of vote: 87.42%

Final status of the vote: Unanimous

Roll Call:

Pam Nourse, Chair (Acton) (Yes)

Michael Ruderman (Arlington) (Yes)

Dave O'Connor (Bolton) (Yes)

Steve LeDoux (Concord) (Yes)

Ford Spalding (Dover) (Yes)

Judith Crocker (Lexington) (Yes)

Jeff Stulin (Needham) (Yes)

Alice DeLuca (Stow) (Yes)

Ms. Nourse thanked Mr. Spalding who reached out personally to all members of the Committee. She noted that the subcommittee had a wonderful tour with Mr. Chiariello and she hopes that the entire school committee will participate in such a tour in the near future.

VOTE: to approve Ford Spalding as Chair of the Superintendent Screening Committee

ACTION 2021 #

Moved (Stulin) and seconded (O'Connor),

To approve Ford Spalding as Chair of the Superintendent Screening Committee

VOTE: 8 members in room at time of vote
Weighted Vote present: 87.42%
Weight needed: > 43.71%
Names of towns opposing or abstaining:
Final percentage results of vote: 87.42%
Final status of the vote: Unanimous

Roll Call:

Pam Nourse, Chair (Acton) (Yes)
Michael Ruderman (Arlington) (Yes)
Dave O'Connor (Bolton) (Yes)
Steve LeDoux (Concord) (Yes)
Ford Spalding (Dover) Yes
Judith Crocker (Lexington) (Yes)
Jeff Stulin (Needham) (Yes)
Alice DeLuca (Stow) (Yes)

Ms. Nourse thanked Mr. Spalding for all the work he has done to bring us to this point in the process.

6. SECRETARY'S REPORT, Alice DeLuca

a. Approval of Draft Minutes of July 6, 2021

Committee Chair noted that the approval of the draft minutes of July 6, 2021 will be tabled to the next scheduled School Committee meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION 2021 #

Moved (DeLuca) and seconded (O'Connor),
To adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

VOTE: 8 members in room at time of vote
Weighted Vote present: 87.42%
Weight needed: > 43.71%
Names of towns opposing or abstaining:
Final percentage results of vote: 87.42%
Final status of the vote: Unanimous

Roll Call:

Pam Nourse, Chair (Acton) (Yes)
Michael Ruderman (Arlington) (Yes)
Dave O'Connor (Bolton) (Yes)
Steve LeDoux (Concord) (Yes)
Ford Spalding (Dover) Yes
Judith Crocker (Lexington) (Yes)
Jeff Stulin (Needham) (Yes)
Alice DeLuca (Stow) (Yes)

Ms. Nourse reminded Committee members that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 14th and reminded member to review the school profile and send any comments for Mr. Spalding, and to review the vaccine fact sheet and send any comments to Dr. Bouquillon.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Pisegna
District Assistant

Alice DeLuca
Secretary